

*The bill will go back to the House for final approval*

April 17, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Senate today passed a bill 88 to 2 with a provision by Congressman Charlie Melancon, D-La., and United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., that gives New Iberia flexibility to use federal funds to increase road safety and reduce congestion.

*The bill will go back to the House for final approval*

April 17, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Senate today passed a bill 88 to 2 with a provision by Congressman Charlie Melancon, D-La., and United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., that gives New Iberia flexibility to use federal funds to increase road safety and reduce congestion.

The provision allows New Iberia to mitigate the traffic accidents and other congestion caused by a railroad track that divides the city with 23 crossings. The Highway Bill included \$1.6 million to separate the road from the railroad. But the city determined it would be prudent to improve safety at the existing crossings, while studying an overpass or underpass option. Sen. Landrieu and Rep. Melancon's work provides flexibility to the city, allowing the money to be used to install active signals and gates, provide continuous access for emergency vehicles across the Southern Pacific rail line, and begin the required studies for an underpass or overpass. According to law, Congress had to approve this change.

"It is great news for New Iberia that this money can be used right away to increase safety and reduce traffic congestion resulting from the railroad," Sen. Landrieu said. "It is a commonsense measure that lets the city use previously appropriated federal funds to improve safety in New Iberia."

**"Providing safe and uninterrupted railroad crossings for drivers in New Iberia is not just a matter of convenience, it's a matter of public safety," said Rep. Melancon.□**

**"Emergency vehicles need to be able quickly cross the tracks at any time of day, and residents need continuous access to New Iberia's two hospitals, which is blocked when a train is stopped on the tracks in town."**

**"This bill will give the City of New Iberia flexibility when determining how best to use federal funds to improve the safety and accessibility of the town's railroad crossings.□**

**Locals know best how to solve local problems, and with this bill's passage, the leaders of New Iberia won't have their hands tied when deciding how to meet this challenge."**

In March 2007, the House passed H.R. 1195 that makes technical corrections to the Highway Bill of 2005. The new bill includes the Melancon-Landrieu provision, which will now go back to the House and then to the President's desk. On April 14, the Administration released a Statement of Administration Policy objecting to the legislation.

Last year, Rep. Melancon wrote a letter to House leadership urging them to include this provision in the House bill ( [click here to see letter](#) ).

# # #